

A Winning Legacy

Mayor Sylvester Turner



**The Power of Vision, Collaboration,
Resilience, and Transformation**

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Vision. Collaboration. Resilience. Transformation.

The Honorable Sylvester Turner's eight years as Mayor of Houston – the nation's most diverse and inclusive city – were defined by his ability to formulate a shared vision, build bridges and relationships in every community, develop partnerships, and generate consensus – skills that resulted in a number of visionary and transformative initiatives. The City of Houston became a national model on multiple platforms during his watch, lauded for achieving historic pension reform, reducing homelessness, leading the global energy transition, supporting the growth of an innovative technology ecosystem, and investing in neighborhoods that have been underserved for decades through his signature equity initiative, Complete Communities.

While such accomplishments would be major by any measure, Mayor Turner simultaneously managed the city's response to seven federally declared disasters during his eight-year tenure. Along with 2017's Hurricane Harvey, which was the most punishing storm in the region's history, Turner oversaw the City's rebound from the Tax Day Flood of 2016, Tropical Storm Imelda in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic, Hurricane Laura and a summer of national civil unrest in 2020, Winter Storm Uri in 2021, and tornadoes in 2023 across Southeast Houston. Those events amplified Houston's already tight fiscal constraints, yet Mayor Turner also partnered with City Council to pass eight balanced budgets. Through it all, he never saw recovery as a process of 'building back'. The transformative initiatives he introduced kept Houston together, building forward – a key ingredient of his winning and lasting legacy.



“When I was elected mayor, many people said I was coming into office at the worst time, and they did not envy me. The City was broke. It had huge pension problems. The streets were in horrible condition. The City was divided. Now and then I ask myself what the Allen Brothers would say to those people. What would Sam Houston or those who laid the blueprint for the Texas Medical Center or the Port of Houston or Johnson Space Center say? Facing challenges is our life’s story; creating opportunities is the reward.”

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

Visionary Leadership and Key Ac

Houston dealt with more than its share of federally declared disasters during Mayor Sylvester Turner’s two terms, but he has never been one to focus on gloom and doom. Not a business-as-usual leader under any circumstances, he brings get-it-done energy to every initiative and challenge.

2016

JANUARY

- Turner sworn in as Houston’s 62nd Mayor
- Begins pension reform negotiations
- Debuts innovative Pothole Repair Program; expands definition of pothole to 5' x 5'; once reported, the city commits to repair by the next business day



APRIL

- Turner navigates the City through the Tax Day Flood
- Creates the Greater Houston Storm Relief Fund
- Launches Complete Communities initiative
- Announces Hire Houston Youth, a summer jobs program that over time surpasses its goal, hiring a total of 20,800 young people in 2023
- The first budget receives a unanimous Council vote in record time
- Releases first comprehensive plan to Fight Human Trafficking

OCTOBER

- City Council approves Turner’s historic pension reform plan

2017

MARCH

State Legislature passes Houston pension reform bill

APRIL

- Turner names Houston’s third Poet Laureate and second Youth Poet Laureate
- Kicks off his signature Complete Communities initiative

SEPTEMBER

- Hurricane Harvey strikes; Houston’s most destructive storm ever. *Every day and multiple times a day, Mayor Turner provides vital information to the public and marshals the needed resources to ensure the City continues to operate during and after the storm.*



- George R. Brown Convention Center becomes a temporary shelter to house more than 10,000 of our neighbors. *The Hurricane Harvey Relief Fund receives \$112 million in donations to enable the City to close shelters after four days, transfer more than 400 people into temporary housing, and assist thousands of others.*

ievements During Times of Crisis

SEPTEMBER (Continued)

- City Solid Waste staff, with the help of San Antonio and private contractors, remove most of the debris in record time, clearing the way for an accelerated permit process for those seeking to rebuild
- Astros win the World Series and more than a million people line downtown Houston's streets for the parade of all time, with no visible signs of Hurricane Harvey



NOVEMBER

- Houston voters approve pension obligation bond issue
- City and partners break ground on the Northeast Water Purification Plant; the largest in the world
- Houston ranks as #2 U.S. City for veterans to start, manage, and grow businesses

2018

JANUARY

- City opens 11 additional neighborhood restoration centers for Hurricane Harvey victims; awards relief funds throughout year

FEBRUARY

- Let Creativity Happen! artist grant program and new arts grants for grassroots organizations in Complete Communities begin

MARCH

- Turner creates Commission to End Gun Violence

APRIL

- City and partners define Houston's four-mile Innovation Corridor



MAY

City aligns with Microsoft to expand innovation and computer literacy

SEPTEMBER

City Launches Climate Action Plan

DECEMBER

Smart Cities Dive names Turner the nation's City Leader of the Year

Visionary Leadership and Key Achievements During Times of Crisis

2019

APRIL

- Houston opens new FCC state-of-the-art recycling center

JUNE

- Turner adds domestic violence to issues addressed by the Mayor's Office of Human Trafficking

AUGUST

- Turner signs Vision Zero Executive Order to end traffic deaths and serious injuries on Houston streets by 2030

SEPTEMBER

- Turner navigates city through Tropical Storm Imelda; partners with Harris County to establish Imelda Assistance Fund
- Opens Mayor's Office of Adult Literacy



OCTOBER

- Turner signs Executive Order establishing living wage for City employees, contractors, and sub-contractors

NOVEMBER

- Houstonians overwhelmingly re-elect Turner for a second term

2020

FEBRUARY

- Turner announces Resilient Houston program

APRIL

- Turner releases Climate Action Plan on Earth Day

MARCH

- COVID-19 pandemic shutdowns begin; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services declares national public health emergency



JUNE

- Turner signs Executive Order banning use of excessive force by HPD; calls for peaceful protest in memory of George Floyd
- Council unanimously approves budget
- Houston commits to 100% renewable energy for all municipal buildings

JULY

- National civil unrest; more than 60,000 Houstonians protest peacefully
- Houston joins Harris County in \$65 million plan to house 5,000 homeless

2021

SEPTEMBER

- Mayor’s Task Force on Policing Reform completes report
- Houston’s state-of-the-art recycling facility wins award for Best of the Best

OCTOBER

- Turner becomes Chair of the Global Resilient Cities Network



NOVEMBER

- Turner launches CARES-funded assistance programs to support childcare, small businesses, and restaurants providing food for workers during COVID-19 shutdowns

JANUARY

- Turner becomes Chair of U.S. Climate Mayors
- Council approves Sunnyside Solar Farm project

FEBRUARY

- Turner again navigates the city through an extreme weather event as Winter Storm Uri wreaks havoc with frigid temperatures across Houston; establishes Winter Storm Uri Relief Fund in partnership with Harris County
- Launches One Safe Houston Initiative

MAY

- Turner becomes President of the African American Mayors Association
- U.S. Green Building Council selects Houston for its LEED for Cities Local Government Leadership Program

NOVEMBER

- Houston Spaceport opens



DECEMBER

- Houston hosts the World Petroleum Congress; Turner gives keynote address

Visionary Leadership and Key Achievements During Times of Crisis

2022

JANUARY

- Houston, Harris County and Coalition for the Homeless launch Phase 2 of the Community COVID Housing Program, a \$100 million initiative to house 7,000 additional people experiencing homelessness

APRIL

- TCEQ approves Sunnyside Solar Farm project, largest in the nation
- Council approves Turner’s Historic Paid Parental Leave Program
- Turner signs sweeping decarbonization policy for all City buildings

SEPTEMBER

- Turner hosts a second gun buyback program



- Houston hosts the Africa Energy Summit; receives national recognition
- Council approves Buffalo Bayou Master Plan, another winning public/private initiative

DECEMBER

- Turner receives the Champion of Service Award
- Houston, Harris County & TXDOT sign MOU for the North Houston Highway Improvement Project

2023

JANUARY

- Tornadoes strike Southeast Houston, the City’s seventh federally declared disaster in eight years
- City opens Alief Neighborhood Center and Park
- City opens Sunnyside Health and Multi-Service Center



FEBRUARY

- Houston opens Innovative Housing Navigation Center to transition homeless from encampments to permanent supportive housing

MARCH

- Turner launches One Clean Houston initiative, a comprehensive plan to combat illegal dumping

APRIL

- City breaks ground on a major flood mitigation project in collaboration with Harris County Flood Control District at the former Inwood Golf Course

MAY

- Council approves Spaceport Training Facility lease for Texas Southern University Aviation Program

JUNE

- Turner unveils One Complete Houston Report detailing results of an Equity Indicators Study

AUGUST

- UNICEF designates Houston its first “Child Friendly City”
- Mayor’s Back to School Fest has record turnout and distributes 25,000 backpacks
- The Hire Houston Youth Summer Intern Program ends with a record 20,080 jobs for students aged 16-24



SEPTEMBER

- Officials announce George R. Brown Convention Center Expansion
- Lynn Wyatt Plaza opens; new Downtown Theater District green space

“It is not my desire to be an incrementalist, to do a little bit here and a little bit there. Let’s be transformational. Let’s build a city that’s stronger, that’s more resilient. Despite seven federally declared disasters in eight years, we kept building Houston forward.”

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

“If you can dream it, you can do it.”

— Mayor Sylvester Turner



About Mayor Sylvester Turner

Born to Serve and Lead

As a brilliant boy of limited means in the 1960s, Sylvester Turner often rode the Number 44 bus to downtown Houston and envisioned his future there. At home he practiced Martin Luther King’s speeches in front of a mirror, dreaming of one day becoming a lawyer and working in one of those swanky downtown high-rises.

That future was not a given. Turner grew up as one of nine children in a modest two-bedroom home in the Acres Home community on Houston’s northwest side. His father, Eddie Turner, who died of cancer when Sylvester was 13, worked as a painter and enlisted his sons to help him cut yards on weekends for extra cash. His mother, Ruby Turner, worked as a maid at the Rice Hotel. Neither of his parents graduated from high school, but they saw to it that their children were educated and well-grounded. Life is not fair, but we must navigate through it, Ruby always said. “Tomorrow will be better than today.”

Encouraged by family, teachers and pastors, Sylvester entered politics early. He was senior class president at Klein High School, where he graduated as valedictorian; then Speaker of the Student Senate at the University of Houston, where he graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. degree in political science. After graduating from Harvard Law School, he was a corporate and business defense trial attorney at Fulbright & Jaworski and in 1983 co-founded the firm of Barnes & Turner.



Elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1988, Turner represented the people of House District 139 in Harris County for 27 years. A Democrat skilled at building consensus across party lines, he led a number of influential committees and supported legislation to broaden public access to doctors, mental health care, and legal aid.

Mayor Turner won his dream job in 2015 and was overwhelmingly re-elected in 2019. During his eight years of term-limited service as Houston's chief executive, he introduced a number of visionary initiatives that are making the City a better, more equitable place for all of its citizens. Not content to achieve a little bit here and a little bit there, he pursued sweeping, transformational change, achieving it on multiple fronts to become a nationally sought-after thought leader on matters of civic importance.



Financial Stability





***“They said it couldn’t be done;
but in Houston, we always
get it done.”***

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

Theater District
NEXT RIGHT

WITH FINANCIAL REFORMS, HOUSTON SHAVED MORE
THAN \$6 BILLION FROM ITS PENSION SYSTEMS LIABILITY

***“Nearly six years after Mayor
Sylvester Turner shepherded
a package of reforms through
the Texas Legislature and the
ballot box, the city’s pension
systems face a far brighter
future, according to business
leaders, financial analysts
and City Hall officials.”***

— Houston Chronicle, January 31, 2023

Sound Financial Management

Before 2016, some of Houston’s civic leaders were convinced City Hall needed a businessperson rather than a politician in the Mayor’s office because escalating budget issues were hampering the City’s progress. With Turner, the City gained a leader who excels at both skill sets.

For nearly two decades, the City had siphoned hundreds of millions of dollars for pension funds and other post-employment benefits from its general fund budget without making much of a dent in the debt. By 2016 the unfunded pension liabilities alone had reached a crushing \$8.1 billion, a figure that was rising by about \$1 million a day. The City’s ‘structural financial barrier’ was so apparent that two months into Turner’s first term, Houston’s credit rating was downgraded.

Turner delivered promptly on a campaign promise of fiscal responsibility by delivering a landmark pension reform package during his first two years as Mayor that put the City’s pension system on a sustainable course and created a national model for comprehensively addressing retirement pensions.

“It’s a new idea with great potential to solve a 15-year-old problem in Houston. If it works as intended, it could become a case study for cities across the country.”

— Mark Watts

Municipal Finance Task Force Chair, Greater Houston Partnership

The Mayor coalesced a broad spectrum of stakeholders – including City employees, their labor unions, City Council, the local business community, the Texas Legislature (which required voter approval of pension obligation bonds), and ultimately, Houston voters – to pass a plan that provides a secure retirement for employees, remains affordable to taxpayers, and makes good on money owed.

By the end of 2022, based on Turner’s pension reforms, the pension’s unfunded liability was reduced from \$8.2 billion to slightly under \$2.2 billion. The reforms eliminate the practice of underfunding, with provisions to amortize the remainder of the City’s unfunded liability over the next 30 years.

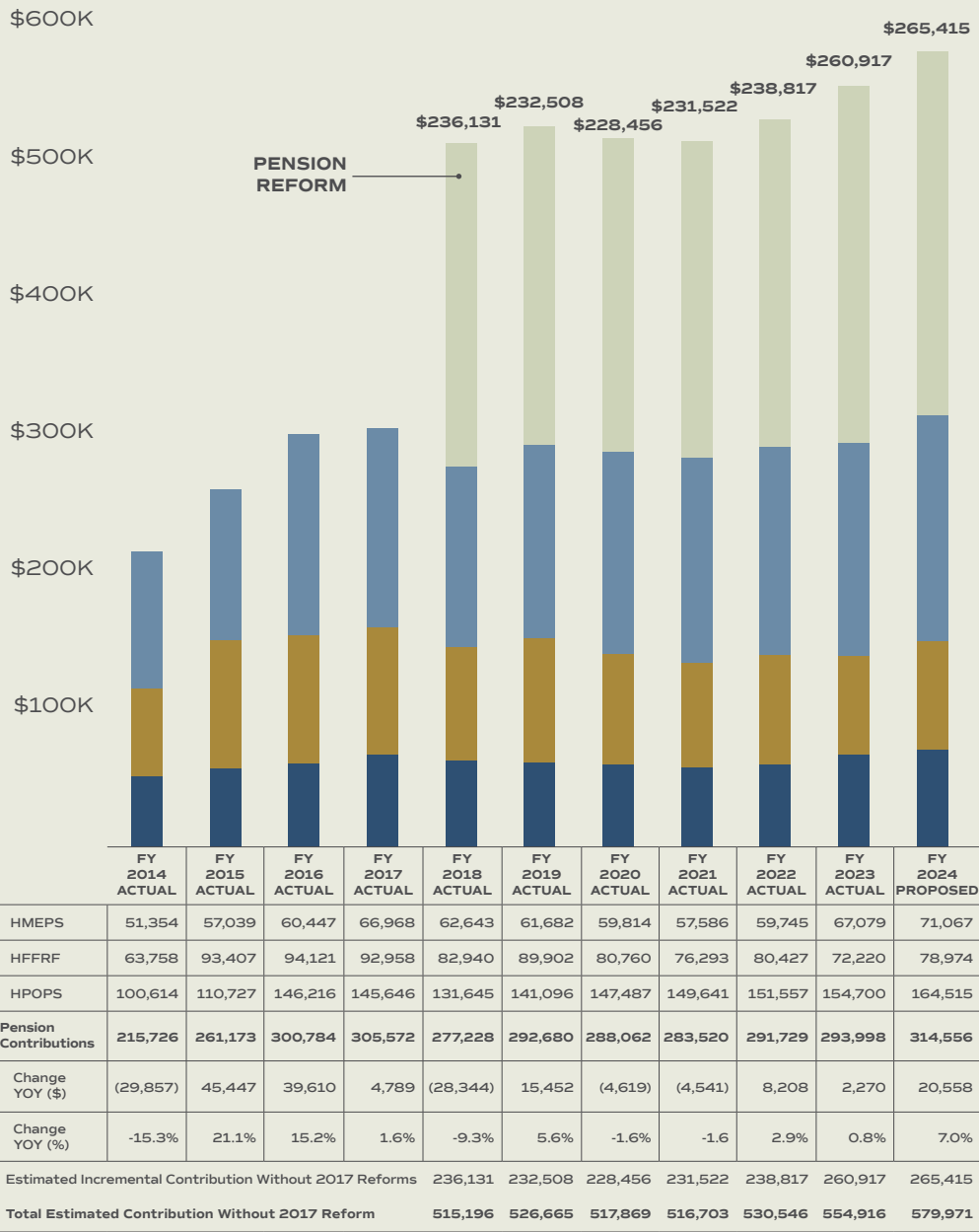
City employees agreed to \$2.8 billion of future benefit cuts. To reimburse funds the City had borrowed against for years, Houston voters approved the issuance of \$1 billion in Pension Obligation Bonds by a 75% margin in November 2017, even as they were still reeling from Hurricane Harvey.

General Fund Pension Contributions

FY2014- FY2024 (\$ in Thousands)

Pension contributions of the three pension systems

HMEPS HFFRF HPOPS Estimated Incremental Contribution Without 2017 Reforms

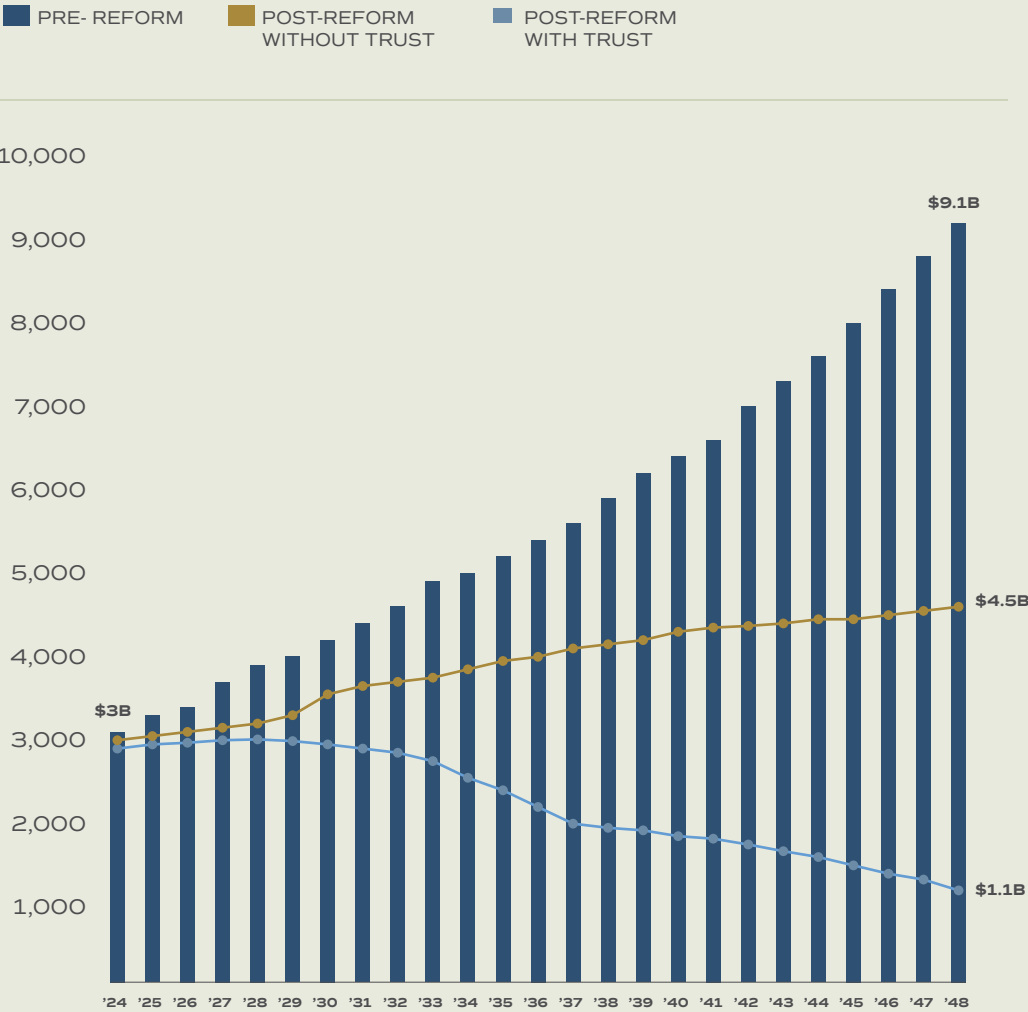


- Notes:
- 1. FY2018 Actual excludes \$910 million Pension Obligation Bonds for General Fund.
 - 2. The full impact of pension reform on City's General Fund contribution is \$1.7 billion.

SOURCE: FY 2024 Budget Press Presentation, May 16, 2023

OPEB Reform Impact

Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Reforms



Notes:
1. Pre-Reform and Pre-Reform without Trust Data is as of Feb '22
2. Post-Reform with Trust Data is as of May '23.

SOURCE: FY 2024 Budget Press Presentation, May 16, 2023

“The good thing about the plan is that cost is now capped. We’re in a fundamentally different situation than we were before.”

— Josh McGee

Former Executive Vice President, Laura and John Arnold Foundation

Turner and City Council passed additional reforms in 2022 to address a \$9.1 billion liability for other post-employment benefits, such as health care, for retirees. Some of those reforms were implemented immediately, shaving \$4.6 billion from that liability. In 2023, Turner and City Council in 2023 established a \$10 million trust fund dedicated to OPEB payments that is expected to grow over time, through investments. With annual payments and the trust, the City is projected to reduce its OPEB unfunded liability by 9.1 billion; to \$1.1 billion by 2048.

Thanks in part to his administration’s fiscal management, pension and OPEB reforms, Turner was able to achieve a balanced budget during each of his eight years. In spite of tough times, with budgetary gaps and the challenges of rebounding from federally declared disasters, not one City employee was laid off. In fact, the lives of workers in many sectors improved, leading area union leaders to write, “Houston could be the best place to work in America.” Turner’s final budget, for Fiscal Year 2024, leaves the City with a healthy operating fund balance of about \$400 million, more than twice the balance required by its financial policies.

Public Safety



***“Promises are easy.
Words are easy. Making
change is hard.”***

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

Mayor Turner implemented significant initiatives to address a broad swath of public safety issues, from violent crime to homelessness.

More Boots on the Ground



Houston hired 2,400 new police officers during Turner’s tenure, also raising salaries and reducing retirement eligibility within the department from 38% to 29%.

2,400 NEW POLICE OFFICERS

One Safe Houston

Houston, like all of America’s other major cities, faced rising crime during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022 Turner introduced One Safe Houston, a nearly \$80 million effort to reduce violent crime, supported by federal and City funds. Built upon collaborative partnerships between stakeholders, community and faith-based leaders, business, and law enforcement agencies across the region, One Safe Houston is a comprehensive, holistic initiative whose programs also address the symptoms of crime that arise from public health crises. Results were evident by early 2023, when crime was lower in almost every major category, including an 11% drop in the homicide rate. Violent crime was down 9.4%, and overall crime was down 4.5%. Additionally, police response times were the lowest of any major U.S. city, including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Dallas, Fort Worth, Austin, and San Antonio.

To reduce and prevent violent crime, Mayor Turner and the City:

- Put more officers on the ground via authorized overtime pay for an additional 125 officers per day.
- Substantially increased funding for crisis intervention, domestic violence, mental/behavioral issues, homelessness, and substance abuse.



Houston hired 2,400 new police officers during Mayor Turner’s tenure.

- Funded and held four gun buyback programs, collecting more than 4,200 guns
- Leveraged and expanded technologies that read license plates, detect gunshots, and provide real-time video to community partners
- Expanded HPD’s Victim Services Division, one of the largest of its kind

20,000 SUMMER JOBS

More than a half-dozen HPD programs supported by One Safe Houston funds improve relationships between law enforcement and the City’s young people. Turner expanded

the Hire Houston Youth program to provide summer job opportunities to 20,000 students between the ages of 16 and 24. This number increased from 450 public sector only jobs at the beginning of the Mayor’s tenure and grew exponentially each year through partnerships with the private sector to add more jobs. In 2023, Hire Houston Youth surpassed its goal of 15,000, providing a total of 20,080 jobs.

HOUSING FOR SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Through Turner’s Housing and Community Development initiative, the City earmarked \$15 million for the Houston Area Women’s Center’s new residential campus, providing one-third of the funds to build 135 emergency housing units and four new Survivor Empowerment Hubs.

POLICING REFORMS

The hometown of George Floyd could easily have been a powder keg during the summer of 2020. Cities across the U.S. struggled to contain rioting and civil unrest after Floyd’s murder by Minneapolis police. Houston – the most diverse city in the nation – also was confronted with hundreds of calls for social justice and racial equity. With Turner’s leadership, the streets stayed relatively peaceful as 60,000 people marched from Discovery Green to City Hall. Mayor Turner even marched with the protesters. Houston was the only major U.S. city that did not need a curfew that summer.

The day of Floyd’s funeral, Turner signed an executive order banning police chokeholds and strangleholds in Houston, along with other measures to prevent excessive force against citizens. His Task Force on Policing Reform, which received input from 7,000 people, represented a cross-section of the Houston community. By September, the Task Force offered more than 100 recommendations regarding community policing, independent oversight, power dynamics, crisis intervention, field readiness, and officer expectations; many of which were adopted.



Mayor Turner initiated policing reforms soon after the death of Houston native George Floyd.



Turner marched from Discovery Green to City Hall in solidarity with peaceful protesters during the nation's summer of civil unrest in 2020.

“As a visionary leader in a post George Floyd environment, Mayor Turner understood the need to establish trust, transparency, and accountability with the citizens of Houston. The early formation of the Mayor’s Task Force on Policing Reform sent the message that he understood the seriousness of the times and took action. Houstonians want to feel safe and know that they can trust their Police Department. Turner reassured that confidence at a very critical time in the life of this great city.”

— Larry Payne
Chair, Policing Reform Task Force

Chronic Homelessness

“I want Houston to be the first big city to end chronic homelessness.”

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

Houston embarked on the largest homeless housing initiative in its history during Mayor Turner’s tenure, partnering with Harris County to strategically utilize \$100 million in COVID-19 related relief funding to provide permanent, supportive housing to more than 14,000 people. Without the City and county collaboration to prioritize federal funds for the program, only 2,000 people would have been housed.

About \$6 million of the funds enabled the opening of Texas’ first Housing Navigation Center in early 2023. The Center is a transitional facility that houses up to 100 people for durations of 30 to 60 days while providing them with mental health, substance abuse, and job training services. Meanwhile, Center partners work with the private sector to secure more permanent supportive housing units. As a result of its holistic initiatives, the City and its partners were able to decommision 113 homeless encampments and reduce the number of people living on the streets by 38% during Mayor Turner’s time in office.

HOW HOUSTON MOVED 25,000 PEOPLE FROM THE STREETS
INTO HOMES OF THEIR OWN

“Even judging by the more modest metrics registered in a 2020 federal report, Houston did more than twice as well as the rest of the country at reducing homelessness over the previous decade.”

— New York Times, June 14, 2022



“The Housing Navigation Center is the culmination of a lot of meetings, effort, and goodwill to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. We couldn’t have done it without a mayor that supported this.”

— Troy Taylor
Chairman, Coalition for the Homeless

Affordable Housing

Houston’s critical need for more affordable housing affects as much as 30% of the local population. Through the City’s Housing and Community Development Department, Mayor Turner initiated an Affordable Home Development Program that provides funding incentives (including infrastructure financing) for builders who make homes attainable for Houstonians earning up to 120 percent of the Area Median Income. (In 2022, that was \$106,300 or less for a family of four.)

Since 2020, the program has spurred the construction of 3,000 single-family homes in neighborhoods across the city. A related incentive to add 10,000 affordable multi-family units to the city’s inventory far exceeded its goal, bringing 13,000 new units to the market.

New Homes for Acres Home

Mayor Turner, city officials, Oracle City Homes, and partners broke ground in January 2023 on the first phase of a development in Acres Home that is being built through the Affordable Home Development Program. Sixty-two percent of the planned development’s 189 homes are reserved as affordable.



Mayor Turner’s Affordable Home Development Program has spurred the construction of 3,000 single-family homes in neighborhoods across Houston.



The 126-unit Edison Lofts are among more than 10,000 new multi-family units that were added to the city’s inventory.

*“I didn’t want to be the mayor
of two cities in one.”*

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

Quality of Life

35



The new Memorial Park Land Bridge reflects Houston's green future.

A WINNING LEGACY

“Mayor Turner has been a champion of park equity, and we have had the confidence to make two of the largest gifts in Houston’s history during his tenure. The success of our partnership with Mayor Turner in Memorial Park is well-known, and Buffalo Bayou East also will be transformational by improving and creating wonderful parks and greenspace in neighborhoods east of downtown.”

— Nancy Kinder
Chief Executive Officer, Kinder Foundation

Growing up in a modest home with eight siblings, Sylvester Turner has always known what it feels like to be on the short end in a city of haves and have-nots. He has devoted much of his career to championing policies that enhance quality of life for all citizens, not just those who can afford to live in wealthy neighborhoods. As Mayor, he addressed economic, environmental, and cultural equity challenges across Houston with virtually every initiative and program he introduced.

—

Complete Communities

—

All neighborhoods matter. Many of the programs and policies Turner launched during his tenure as Mayor are integrated into Complete Communities, his signature equity initiative to bring resources and investments to historically underserved and under-resourced neighborhoods. The initiative didn't just pop into his head overnight. He grew up in one of those neighborhoods, knowing what it feels like to be poor. He has chosen to continue living in that same neighborhood.

Complete Communities is not about rethinking the past, however. It's about catalyzing opportunities for now and into the next century. Focused on ten targeted communities - Acres Home, Alief-Westwood, Fort Bend Houston, Gulfton, Kashmere Gardens, Magnolia Park-Manchester,



With Phase I of Mayor Turner’s Love Our Parks Complete Communities initiative, the City brought game-changing improvements to five neighborhood parks in under-resourced communities.

Near Northside, Second Ward, Sunnyside, and Third Ward – the initiative aims to attract investment while ensuring that current residents are not displaced by gentrification. The ideal Complete Community has affordable homes, good jobs, health care services, well-maintained parks and streets, retail commerce, quality schools, mass transit options, and families who have chosen to live there for generations.

Hundreds of residents and other partners across the public, private, and non-profit sectors participated in creating action plans for each Complete Community based on its unique landscape and needs. The City set investment examples by building several long-awaited state-of-the-art capital improvement

projects, including the all-new Alief Neighborhood Center and Park, the first City of Houston multi-service facility designed to provide Library, Parks & Recreation, and Health Department services; and the Sunnyside Health and Multi-Service Center, the first to offer combined services with an emphasis on community health.

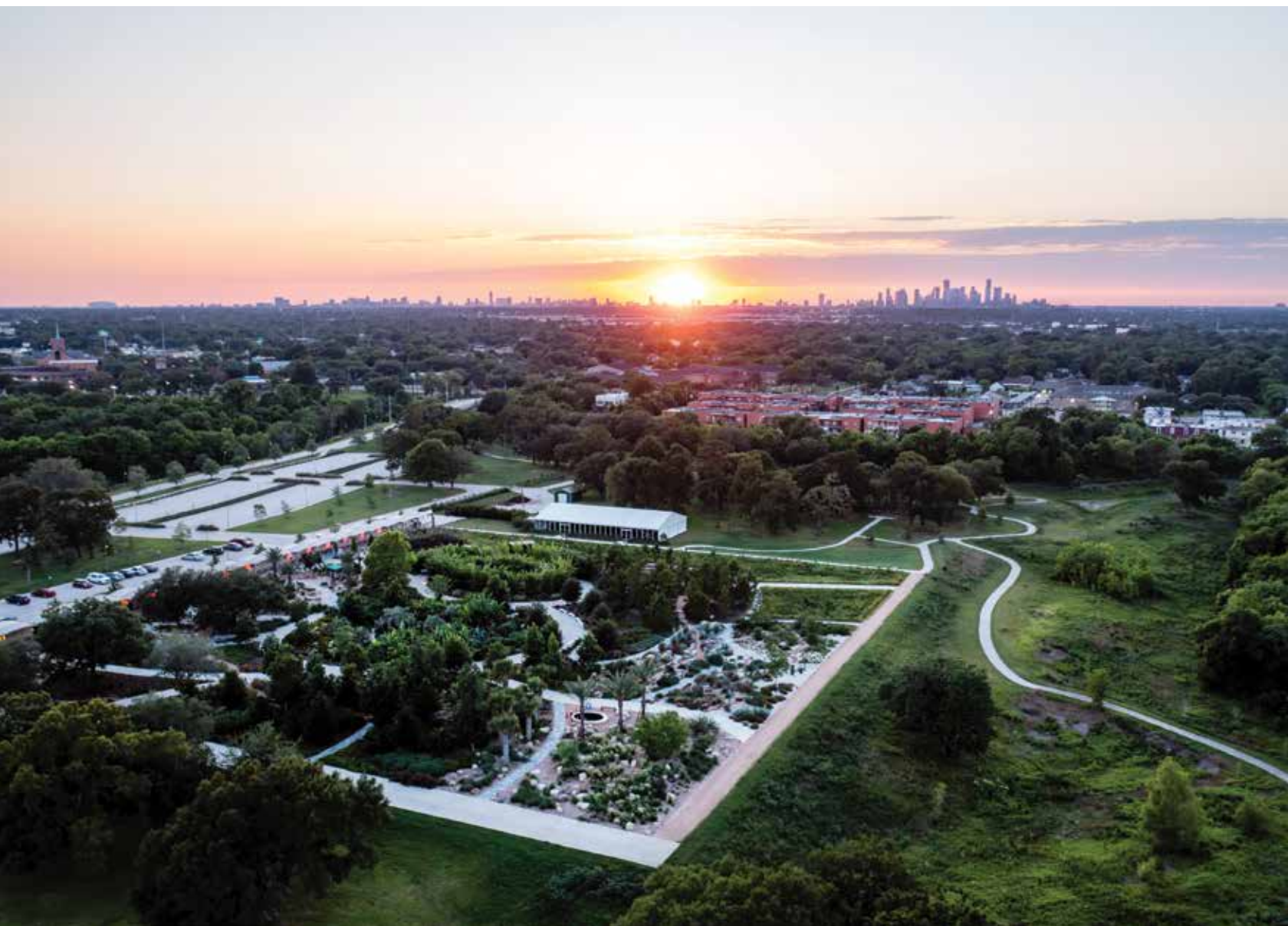
In Acres Home, the City revitalized the former Bethune Academy campus to create the Bethune Empowerment Center, a business incubator and vocational training facility designed as a catalyst model for moving Houston's economy into the next century. The City partnered with the Bezos Foundation to create free-admission Bezos Academy Early Childhood Centers in the Magnolia Park-Manchester, Sunnyside, Denver Harbor, and North Houston neighborhoods. In Fort Bend, the City partnered to transform a vacant shopping center site into a 126-unit development of affordably priced family apartments with an early learning center, a clubhouse, and other gathering spaces.

Other projects are creating a cleaner city for coming generations. In Sunnyside, the City has partnered to begin transforming a 50-year old, contaminated, 240-acre landfill into the nation's largest urban solar farm. Across the city, Turner's One Clean Houston initiative addresses illegal dumping by focusing on rapid cleanup of neighborhood eyesores and health hazards, better enforcement, and prevention and education.

The Mayor's Complete Communities staff coordinates the initiative's many projects with support from the Planning and Development Department, the Department of Neighborhoods, the Mayor's Assistance Office, the Mayor's Office of Education, and the Mayor's Office of Resilience and Sustainability. Action plans and other neighborhood data are maintained and made public on a dedicated portal.

Parks and Green Space

Houston has undergone a ‘green renaissance’ during the past decade, as public-private partnerships drive the reinvention of parks across the city. Collaborating with park conservancies, Harris County, and donors, Mayor Turner participated in the transformation of Memorial Park, where the Eastern Glades and spectacular Land Bridges were added and the PGA Tour returned. Transformation also occurred with other municipal golf courses: On the City’s north side, one became Brock Adventure Park, a destination with a ropes course, a Ninja Warrior course, a kayak/canoe launch, nature-based programming, and an event center. South of Downtown, culminating years of planning and work from previous administrations, a former golf course blossomed magnificently into the Houston Botanic Garden.





The Houston Botanic Garden’s Susan Garver Family Discovery Garden, designed as a wetlands, brings visitors close to wildlife and native plants.



ABOVE: Memorial Park’s Cyvia and Melvyn Wolff Prairie also functions as a wildlife viewing area and stormwater detention basin. FACING PAGE: Houston Botanic Garden’s Global Collection Garden, seen from the air, displays plants from tropical, subtropical and arid environments in greenspace that formerly held a golf course.



Langwood Park in northwest Houston received a \$1 million transformation through Mayor Turner’s 50/50 Park Partners initiative led by the City, Houston Parks and Recreation, the Houston Parks Board and the Greater Houston Partnership.



Children at the Manchester neighborhood’s Hartman Park love the new playground created through the Mayor’s 50/50 Park Partners program and sponsored by Valero. A total of 22 parks have been substantially improved through the program.

Mayor Turner also enlisted corporate sponsors to improve park equity across the city with game-changing improvements. Through his 50/50 Parks Initiative, 22 neighborhood parks, playgrounds, and green spaces, with five more in the planning phase, were substantially renovated and improved.

Education and Child Development

UNICEF officially designated Houston the first child friendly city in the United States in August 2023, recognizing the municipality’s commitment to championing the rights of all children through policies and programs that address poverty, homelessness, climate change, racial injustice, and gun violence. The Mayor’s Office of Education and Youth Engagement led the application process with the collaboration of nearly ten city departments, more than thirty community organizations, and more than 600 Houstonians who are invested in advocating for and supporting children’s rights.

People with Disabilities

Turner is the first mayor to receive the George Bush Medal for empowering people with disabilities. Throughout his time in office, he was committed to making public spaces and services more accessible and creating walkable, livable, and compassionate communities that connect all people to opportunities. During the award ceremony on the 33rd anniversary of the Americans with Disability Act, activist Lex Frieden noted, “This man is a leader, and he doesn’t just talk the talk... He is the inclusion mayor.”

Arts and Culture

Artists and the cultural community are deeply woven into Houston's fabric, feeding the city's soul and improving the well-being of people and neighborhoods. Mayor Turner proudly advocated for art in all its forms, across all levels and in multiple venues.

The Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs significantly improved the accessibility of the City's grant awards, art collecting, and art commissioning processes. After a comprehensive equity review of the City's Civic Art Collection revealed overwhelming bias in past collecting habits against Houston's BIPOC female and Latino artists, the leadership team took immediate action to identify barriers in the commissioning process and implemented changes to ensure that the Civic Art Collection truly represents the nation's most diverse city.

Three new cultural districts – including those in the Complete Communities of Fifth Ward and Third Ward – were designated during Turner's tenure, bringing Houston's total to seven. Cultural districts are eligible for funds and grants from City of Houston hotel occupancy taxes.

Responding to disasters that severely impacted every arts organization in Houston, the Mayor, City Council, and their leadership teams used every mechanism possible to help the city's creative communities survive, recover, and build resilience.

- A permanent local disaster response system for artists and arts organizations grew from Houston's Harvey Arts Recovery Fund, which provided emergency response, recovery resources, and rebuilding aid in coordination with other local and national arts organizations.



Americans for the Arts named Dixie Friend Gay's monumental sculpture "Books of a Feather," which Houston commissioned for its Alice McKean Young Neighborhood Library, one of the nation's best public artworks in 2018.

***“Our Mayor has given his heart,
his soul, his time, his wisdom,
and his passion to ensuring that
the Houston art scene is second
to no other. I doubt we will ever
again have a Mayor who has
done as much for the arts as
Sylvester Turner.”***

— Lester Marks
Mayor's Ambassador to the Arts

- During the COVID-19 shutdowns of 2020, the City authorized investments of \$5 million in CARES funds to arts relief programs, providing financial assistance for basic needs to more than 400 artists and arts workers. It also advanced more than \$4 million in civic art opportunities for the Houston Airport System and issued micro-grants to support the creation of virtual and streaming art activations.
- To employ creatives who were acutely impacted by global events in 2020, Houston Airports and the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs (MOCA) undertook a historic acquisition project, advancing more than \$4 million in civic art opportunities for George Bush Intercontinental and William P. Hobby airports. Through that effort, the City commissioned 10 major permanent installations, including the Aquarius Tunnel by Janavi Mahimtura Folmsbee at IAH, and purchased 74 portable works of art in various media, representing a mix of legendary and emerging talents from across Texas. The massive project garnered Houston the worldwide "2023 Best Art in the Airport" award from the rating organization Skytrax.

“Mayor Turner’s support of The Ensemble Theatre has been stellar. His passion for the arts, and particularly for preserving African American artistic expression, is unparalleled.”

— Argentina James
Board Chair Emeriti, The Ensemble Theatre



Janavi Mahimtura Folmbsee’s “Aquarius Art Tunnel” was among more than \$4 million in civic art opportunities advanced during the COVID-19 shutdown to employ creatives.



The Ensemble Theatre was among 62 Houston arts and cultural organizations that received a collective \$5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds in 2023 through a collaboration between the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs and the Mid-America Arts Alliance.

“Mayor Turner’s legacy will benefit many of our historically under resourced geographic communities for several generations. His compassionate and visionary work has empowered communities to advocate for the improvements they seek. With his Complete Communities program as well as city-based education, employment and new Houston Arts Alliance grant initiatives, his administration has fortified the essential infrastructure to support creative processes that improve the quality of life for all Houstonians.”

— Michelle Barnes
Executive Director, Community Artists’ Collective

- The \$26.5 million Lynn Wyatt Square, funded with public-private collaboration, has reinvented the Theater District Houston's central plaza as a park with a cascading water feature, gardens, public art, a restaurant, and a shaded performance lawn.
- The City contributed \$5.2 million to the renovation of Jones Hall.
- To promote literacy and the spoken word, Mayor Turner reactivated the City's Poet Laureate Program, appointing a series of four local writers to the position during his tenure.

Jaume Plensa's "Tolerance" sculptures on Allen Parkway face the site of the forthcoming Ismaili Center Houston, the first facility of its kind in the United States.





LEFT: Aris Kian Brown, Houston’s sixth poet laureate in a program Mayor Turner revived, represents Houston’s literary future. RIGHT: The new Lynn Wyatt Square invigorates the heart of Houston’s Downtown Theater District.



Falon Mihalic’s monumental sculpture “Windbloom,” one of three major artworks commissioned for the new Alief Neighborhood Center and Park, maps breezes above a butterfly garden.

“Mayor Turner often calls the arts “the soul of the city.” He has put this sentiment into action, recognizing that Houston’s cultural community represents a major economic driver and sustains our residents in so many ways. Under his extraordinary leadership, city grants funded by a portion of hotel occupancy taxes have been pushed into every corner of the city and offered to a much broader range of artists and organizations. Mayor Turner also truly engages when he appears at cultural events. His presence has meant the world.”

— Leigh Smith
former Chair, Houston Arts Alliance;
current Chair, Houston Ballet Foundation Board

Environment

MAYOR SYLVESTER TURNER



“We can’t fix the problem overnight – but if we take bold, transformative action to lead our city down a more sustainable path, we’ll leave behind a better Houston, and a better world, for future generations.”

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

“As the Mayor of the Energy Capital of the World and the Chair of Climate Mayors, Sylvester Turner has been a pivotal leader in catalyzing climate action. By nurturing a clean energy economy that has increased community resilience in Houston, he also has inspired fellow mayors across the United States. He leaves an influential legacy in encouraging the nation’s transition to a clean energy economy.”

— Kate Wright
Executive Director, Climate Mayors

During Turner’s tenure, Houston experienced three 500-year floods in as many years, culminating with Hurricane Harvey – the largest rain event in North American history and a wake-up call for everyone who sets a course for the region’s future. Harvey was larger, slower, and dropped 40% more rain than it would have if it had occurred 100 years ago. Stronger storms aren’t the only challenge posed by climate change. Spring now arrives three weeks earlier than it did even a generation ago in Houston, and the already hot summers keep turning hotter. Addressing the climate crisis is mission critical in the nation’s fourth largest city.

A Leader in Resilience and Sustainability

The Turner administration’s bold environmental actions have been recognized around the globe and are producing results that will benefit Houston – and the world – for decades to come.

Turner unveiled his Resilient Houston strategy and the City’s first Climate Action Plan in 2020, establishing an Office of Resilience and Sustainability in 2021 to implement the goals and coordinate efforts between all City departments and external partners. Built on existing efforts, both plans present trackable, achievable goals.

The Resilient Houston strategy focuses on measures to mitigate the effects of devastating weather events. Its target objectives, comprising 18 goals, address the dynamics of individuals, neighborhoods, the area's complex natural system of bayous, the City's operations and infrastructure, and regional collaboration.

As a member of the C40 Cities Global Climate Leadership Group and Chair of U.S. Climate Mayors, Turner took bold steps toward achieving carbon neutrality in Houston by 2050, in accordance with the Paris Climate Agreement. Those efforts also contribute to building climate resilience and leveraging Houston's role as a leader of the global energy transition. Houston's Climate Action Plan – the first created by a Houston Mayor – is a science-based, community-driven strategy for making efficient transportation networks, building operations, and waste systems as clean and efficient as possible.

Decarbonization

The City estimates that a sweeping decarbonization policy for City buildings approved by Turner in 2022 will avoid more than 250,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, also paying for itself by that time, primarily through energy savings that could amount to \$20 million a year. Elements of the policy also directly support Texas' grid resilience efforts, better preparing the community for extreme weather events.

- The City owns and operates more than 500 buildings; all are now powered by renewables, making Houston the nation's largest municipal purchaser of renewable energy among U.S. cities.
- Turner worked with City Council to replace an aging City fleet with 378 hybrid and battery-electric vehicles, with the goal of converting all non-emergency, light-duty municipal vehicles to electric by 2030.



The Sunnyside Solar Farm will generate enough electricity to power up to 5,000 homes, with a community component that will reduce energy costs for nearby residents.

- The Mayor led the charge to develop the Sunnyside Landfill Solar Project, the nation's largest urban solar farm. Transforming the site of a contaminated, 240-acre landfill, the project addresses 50 years of environmental justice challenges and creates job and training opportunities in a historically under-resourced community. When complete, the 50-megawatt plant will generate enough electricity to power up to 5,000 homes and remove 120,000 pounds of carbon emissions annually.
- To further reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, the City and other entities planted 1.4 million trees, achieving more than 31% of a goal to add 4.6 million trees to Houston's landscape by 2030. In synch with that effort,

Houston created a Tree Equity platform to encourage the planting of trees where they are needed most. The platform gathers planting information from major partners, non-profit agencies, and communities and provides heat map data to address disparities in total canopy cover.

- Affirming its progress and model example, Houston earned an A rating from the Carbon Disclosure Project and the U.S. Green Building Council's Gold certification in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Cities, and the Houston Airport System began steps to receive full Airport Carbon Accreditation, aiming to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

Houston invested more than \$780 million in drainage infrastructure during Turner's tenure, completing 86 of 100 planned green stormwater projects. Arthur Storey Park, below, incorporates a pond, a jogging trail, and a tai chi court. The City also initiated a tax abatement program to encourage private development of green stormwater infrastructure.



“As the inaugural Chairman of Resilient Cities Network’s Board of Directors, Mayor Turner has overseen investments in resilience and climate action, building essential and equitable capacity across multiple cities for dealing with shocks and stresses. His commitment to sharing knowledge and solutions has helped dozens of cities grappling with similar challenges of heat, floods, drought, hurricanes, and sea level rise. Mayor Turner leads with action, transitioning his bold vision into real change on the ground while inspiring fellow leaders around the world.”

— Lauren Sorkin
Executive Director, Resilient Cities Network

- Other environmental achievements during Turner's tenure:
 - Houston partnered with a private firm to build a \$23 million, state of the art recycling plant that handles glass, paper, and plastics and employs 100 people
 - Houston and its partners in the Houston Recycling Collaborative announced the construction of the \$100 million Cyclyx Circularity Center, a first-of-its-kind plastic waste sorting and processing facility
 - More than 400 miles of bikeways were added, achieving 81% of a 500-mile goal
 - City Council approved a Nature Preserve Ordinance designed to protect 7,423 acres of natural habitat in City of Houston parks
 - Houston area voters approved a \$3.5 billion bond issue in 2019 to fund transformational transit projects of the METRONext Moving Forward Plan, which includes 500 miles of regional mobility improvements that will ease traffic flows as the region's population swells to 10 million people by 2040.
 - METRO's Climate Action Plan received a boost in 2022 when the Federal Transit Administration awarded the Authority a \$21.6 million grant to purchase electric buses and related charging infrastructure.
 - Port Houston adopted a Sustainability Action Plan that identifies 27 initiatives to meet a strategic goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050.
 - While advocating for environmental justice on behalf of Houstonians who live within the Kashmere Gardens Cancer Cluster, where a creosote plant has contaminated the soil, water, and air, the Mayor also initiated a relocation effort operated by City departments.



The Inwood Forest Stormwater Detention Basin Project will incorporate new amenities along Vogel Creek and better protect thousands of homes that flooded during Hurricane Harvey.



Mayor Turner worked with City Council to replace some of Houston’s aging fleet with 378 hybrid and battery electric vehicles and set a goal to convert all non-emergency, light-duty municipal vehicles to electric by 2030.

*“It was time to stop talking
about it and do everything
we could to make it happen.”*

— Mayor Sylvester Turner



Services and Infrastructure

63



The New Alief Neighborhood Center and Park serves a community where more than 90 languages are spoken.

A WINNING LEGACY

“Mayor Turner could have delayed the construction of our new center after Hurricane Harvey, when there were so many other pressing needs. But he didn’t. The Alief Neighborhood Center is open today because he said, ‘We’re going forward because Alief has waited 20 years.’ It finally got done because he made it happen.”

— Barbara Quattro
President, Alief Super Neighborhood Council #25

From building innovative new multi-service centers designed with communities’ needs in mind to expanding critical infrastructure and transportation facilities, Turner’s administration brought game-changing capital improvements to the City’s landscape.

Alief Neighborhood Center and Park

One of Houston’s most diverse working-class communities received a long-awaited nucleus in January 2023 with the opening of the Alief Neighborhood Center and Park (see pp. 62-63). Replacing a worn, 60-year-old recreation center, the new facility provides a model for integrated community development – the first in Houston to offer services from three City departments under one roof: Health and Human Services (which operates a senior center and a women, infant, and child clinic there), Parks and Recreation, and the Houston Public Library.

The LEED Silver Certified building, which won the 2023 SARA National Design Award, overlooks a renovated 38-acre green space with a public pool, a playground, a skatepark, a baseball diamond, soccer fields, walking paths, tennis and basketball courts, and an event lawn for outdoor concerts and markets.

Sunnyside Health & Multi-Service Center

With the opening of Houston’s first combined health and multi-service center in 2023, the City took aim at tackling disparities in the historically under-resourced community

of Sunnyside. The Houston Health Department's new \$25.8 million, 57,000-square foot facility offers a seniors meal program, a clinic; a financial empowerment center; tax services; health programs for mothers, infants and children; dental services; behavioral wellness programs; and a Mayor's Citizen's Assistance Office as well as a fitness center, conference rooms, and classrooms that are available to local non-profit organizations.

Northeast Water Purification Plant Expansion

The City initiated the region's most important water supply project in 2017 to meet the fast-growing regional population's demand for clean drinking water and to comply with a mandate to reduce dependence on groundwater, which is a major cause of flood-inducing subsidence. The \$1.5 billion, multi-phase expansion includes the construction of two 108-inch pipelines that will carry water from a new intake pump station at Lake Houston to new facilities within the Northeast Water Purification Plant's 152-acre treatment site. Shared by five water providers (including the North, West, and Central Harris County Regional Water Authorities, the North Fort Bend Water Authority, and the City of Houston), the project is designed to triple the current output to 400 million gallons of drinking water per day when it is complete in 2024.

Houston Airport System

Houston invested \$3.2 billion in capital improvement projects for its airports during Mayor Turner's tenure. Strategic investments in airport infrastructure, technology, team members, and the arts program resulted in world-class guest experiences. Both airports were recognized by Skytrax, the premiere international air transport rating organization, which performs annual audits to assess the quality of products and staff service standards.



The new, state-of-the-art Sunnyside Health & Multi-Service Center incorporates clinics, family programs, a fitness center, meeting rooms, and a Mayor's Citizen's Assistance Office.

“The Bible says when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice. That is what we’re doing here today. We have someone with tenacity, someone with integrity, someone who is willing to work and fight, someone who allows me to call day and night. I praise Mayor Sylvester Turner and thank God for this Multi-Service Center.”

— Sandra Hines
President, Sunnyside Community Energy Group and
Honorary “Mayor” of Sunnyside

For two consecutive years, in 2022 and 2023, the City’s William P. Hobby Airport received a Five-Star Skytrax rating, making it the first airport in North America and one of just 16 worldwide to earn top honors. George Bush Intercontinental achieved a 4-Star rating for six consecutive years. Skytrax also recognized the Houston Airport System with its World’s Best Art Program award in 2023, when passengers surveyed by the company also rated Hobby and Bush Intercontinental among the second and third best airports in America, respectively.

The Houston Airport System also established the world’s first urban commercial spaceport. In addition to serving as an FAA-licensed launch and landing site for suborbital, reusable launch vehicles, Houston Spaceport is transforming Ellington Airport into a hub for space activity with laboratory and technology incubator spaces and large-scale hardware production facilities.

Other Essential Infrastructure

- In 2022 the Port of Houston, which ranks first nationwide in international tonnage, saw the highest general cargo volume in its history – 55 million tons – marking tremendous growth for the eight public terminals serving the region.
- After years of negotiation, Houston finalized an agreement with the Environmental Protection Agency to curb sewage spills that violate the Clean Water Act, committing \$2 billion in improvements over 15 years to upgrade City’s aging wastewater system and maintain pace with the rapidly growing population.
- Turner declared a paradigm shift to tackle Houston’s long-standing mobility challenges, prioritizing safer streets and intermodal transportation options. More than 1,419 lane miles of Houston roadways have been rehabilitated since 2018, and for seven years the City has addressed 96% of reported potholes by the next business day.



Collins Aerospace, one of three anchor tenants at Houston Spaceport, is engineering, testing, and integrating next-generation spacesuits for NASA at its new 120,000-square foot facility.



Houston Spaceport’s anchor tenants collectively bring more than \$4 billion worth of contracts to the city’s economy. Axiom Space is building the first commercial space station, while Intuitive Machines is building a lunar lander.

A large, modern, white, curved sculpture resembling a giant arch or a stylized 'C' shape, made of many thin, parallel slats. It is situated in a park with green grass and trees. A group of people is gathered at its base. The sky is clear blue. In the top left corner, there are some green leaves from a tree.

'Arco del Tiempo (Arch of Time)' will provide beauty and renewable energy at Guadalupe Park.

Civic Innovation

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“We must leap, not stroll, into the future. We must sprint, not jog. Houston will be the Smart City of the world as we develop excellence in innovation, AI and digital equity.”

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

“Mayor Turner’s commitment to cutting-edge technology and innovative placemaking has furthered Houston’s position as one of the most innovative cities in the country. His vision drove the successful implementation of IKE interactive wayfinding kiosks in the public right-of-way, encouraging mobility and enabling discovery of Houston’s small businesses, cultural activities, social services, and events. He insisted on equitable distribution, so that people across the city will benefit from the program for many years to come.”

— Pete Scantland
Chief Executive Officer, IKE Smart City

Mayor Turner often credits his daughter, Ashley Turner, with asking him to imagine not what Houston is today, but what it can be in the future. That thinking informs his forward-minded leadership within City government and extends to his support of technology-focused initiatives in the academic, institutional, and corporate realms. Turner established an Innovation and Technology Task Force early in his tenure and has tenaciously pursued avenues for growing the City’s tech ecosystem.

—

A Smart City

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Turner led Houston’s leap into Smart City technology. The City’s digital alliance in 2018 with Microsoft was the first of its kind in the U.S., bringing innovations in big data, artificial intelligence, and the digital economy to City operations. Through the Smart City initiative, Houston is leveraging data and utilizing emerging technology to enhance transportation services, public safety, resiliency and sustainability, and citizen engagement. Among the more than two dozen projects that have launched: METRO buses now have Wi-Fi service. It’s easier to find parking spaces in City lots. Sensors collect data to guide the public to safety during emergencies. Drivers can be alerted to high-water conditions. Monitors track sewer outflows and air pollutants.

Houston’s Microsoft relationship grew in 2020 with “Accelerate,” a multi-dimensional program coordinated with corporate partners, K-12 school systems, and higher education providers to address equity gaps in digital literacy and training among citizens of all ages.

Houston also became one of the first U.S. cities to partner with Verizon to deploy 5G residential service during Turner’s first term. The government technologies publication Smart Cities Dive acknowledged his vision by naming him its 2018 Leader of the Year.

Houston Health Department, Baylor College of Medicine, and Rice University partnered to use technology to determine the level of COVID in the city irrespective of people getting tested. The same technology was used to determine the extent of Monkey Pox the city.

#Silicon Bayou

Seeing innovation and a vibrant startup community as key drivers to the City’s present and future, Turner has championed the growth of Houston’s technology ecosystem through its energy and medical sectors. In collaboration with the Greater Houston Partnership, Central Houston, and major institutions, the City designated a four-mile district in 2018 as the Innovation Corridor. Dozens of new startup support operations and infrastructure projects have opened or are underway there, from new incubators and accelerators to a collaborative life sciences research campus. Linked by light rail, bike lanes, and pedestrian thoroughfares, hubs of tech innovation and entrepreneurship within the Corridor offer easy access to key industry and institutional players.

Turner takes his role as the City’s chief advocate for all business and trade seriously. Hewlett Packard and NRG are among the industry giants who relocated corporate headquarters to the City during his tenure.

“Becoming a smarter city is more than just the devices and the sensors. It’s about creating an environment that allows each individual to connect with the city, and the city to connect with each citizen.”

— Raamel Mitchell
Citizenship and Public Affairs Director, Microsoft

Mayor Turner signs a beam during the topping out ceremony for the TMC³ Collaborative Building, the central hub of the Texas Medical Center’s forthcoming Helix Park development, where research partners will help define the future of medicine.





Rice University’s Ion development in Midtown opened in 2022 as a hub for academic, corporate, and entrepreneurial research and collaboration focused on the future of energy and energy transition.



As part of a tax abatement agreement forged through the Mayor’s Office of Economic Development, the Founders District in West Houston implemented partnerships between The Cannon’s flagship entrepreneurial hub, Houston Community College and Spring Branch ISD to develop future founders.

Boston-based Greentown Labs opened Houston's first climate-tech start-up incubator in 2021, transforming the site of a former grocery store into a 40,000-square foot prototyping facility, office and community space for about 50 young companies.

The 16-acre Ion development founded by Rice University launched in 2022, transforming a former Sears & Roebuck building into a hub of academic, corporate, and entrepreneurial research and collaboration focused on the future of energy and energy transition. Within the Ion are office spaces, collaborative working spaces, and restaurants.

"Arco del Tiempo (Arch of Time)," commissioned by the City during Turner's final year in office, will set a new public art standard for environmental sustainability when it is complete in 2024. An interactive time-measuring device, the sculpture creates a thread between the celestial and the terrestrial by beaming sunlight onto the ground plane of Guadalupe Plaza Park in the East End / Secundo barrio. The monumental work also functions as a renewable energy plant: It contains solar modules that will generate about 400,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, offsetting more than 100% of the power demand of the nearby Talento Biligüe de Houston, a generational, City-owned Latino cultural hub for performing arts.

Adult Literacy

Houston's economy could grow by \$13 billion if more than 1 million local adults who are functionally illiterate improved their skills. Literacy also is linked to better health and higher levels of civic engagement. Turner launched the nation's only Mayor's Office for Adult Literacy in 2019 with the unique goal of fostering economic impact through service. Partnering with the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation, the Office produced an Adult Literacy Blueprint, a comprehensive plan to significantly improve Houston's literacy levels by 2036.

Major League Excitement

Turner set a record as Houston’s top pitchman and lead civic host for national and international sports championships. He helped welcome visitors to special games and championship tournaments in more than 30 types of competitions, many of which returned to Houston multiple years. Covering an impressive array of event types, they ranged from major golf, basketball, baseball, football, and soccer events to a Bassmaster Classic fishing tournament with a record crowd to Iron Man North American Championships, Fast Pitch Nationals, BMX Nationals, the WWE Survivor Series, World Table Tennis Championships, and World Transplant Games. While the Houston Astros kept Houston’s Number One Fan busy during four Major League Baseball World Series (with big celebrations when the home team won the title in 2017 and 2022), Turner played a significant role in helping Houston score such other major events as Super Bowl LI in 2017, NCAA Men’s Final Four championships (2016 and 2023), and the U.S. Women’s Open (2020). His enthusiasm will continue to pay dividends for years: He helped secure the 2024 College Football Playoffs, the 2025 AAU Junior Olympic Games (which Houston also hosted in 2016 and 2021), the 2026 FIFA World Cup and NCAA Division 1 Men’s Basketball Regionals, and the 2028 BMX World Championship.

The Mayor’s significant role in helping Houston secure major conferences also will be in evidence after his term ends, when the city welcomes the 2028 Republican National Convention.

“You rarely see mayors in the room during pitches for major sporting events such as the Super Bowl, the World Cup and the NCAA Final Four, but Sylvester Turner is always there for Houston, and he always helps to close the deal.”

— J. Kent Friedman
Chair, Harris County – Houston Sports Authority

Houston's Number One Sports Fan, Mayor Turner helped celebrate two Houston Astros World Series Championship wins during his tenure.



“Mayor Turner has been invaluable to helping the Harris County – Houston Sports Authority market the region as the best place on the globe to host sporting events. He has been by our organization’s side for each and every win, along with numerous other hosted events that have brought huge positive economic impact to our destination.”

— Janis Burke
Chief Executive Officer, Harris County – Houston Sports Authority



LEFT: NBA Hall of Famer Elvin Hayes, Mayor Turner and Janis Burke, CEO of the Harris County - Houston Sports Authority, cheered on thousands of youngsters during the Men's Final Four Dribble in 2021. RIGHT: Mayor Turner was a key player in Houston's winning bid to host the FIFA World Cup in 2026.



The world came to party at Avenida Houston during Super Bowl LI in 2017.

Convention Center Expansion

During his last months as Mayor, Turner celebrated a significant win and a legacy-defining moment for the City's future. The bipartisan Senate Bill 1057 in 2023 enabled Houston to launch a generational transformation of its 35-year-old convention campus. The bill will provide an estimated \$1.8 billion in economic development funding during the next 30 years, utilizing certain hotel-motel tax revenues to significantly enhance Houston's competitiveness as a convention and tourism destination and facilitate growth across the surrounding East downtown area for the next 50 years, and beyond.

“This will enable us to transform our downtown and convention district in a way that not only makes us a more attractive destination but makes us a stronger economic base and ultimately creates jobs.”

— Michael Heckman
President and Chief Executive Officer, Houston First Corporation



To the Citizens of Houston:

It has been the privilege of my life to serve you as our city’s 62nd Mayor. The accomplishments detailed in this book are not only mine; they are your accomplishments, as well. What we have done in the past eight years, we have done together. I would like to extend special gratitude to the 22,000 employees who keep the city running day in and day out, through tragedies and triumphs. Nothing we accomplish happens without you.

Thank you all, with all of my heart.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sylvester Turner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Sylvester Turner

A Vibrant, Lasting Legacy

A number of projects initiated during Mayor Turner’s administration will reap rewards for Houston long after he leaves office.

FISCAL
YEAR 2024
BUDGET
HAS A
HEALTHY
BALANCE
OF MORE
THAN \$400
MILLION

The world’s first
generative and
sustainable public
artwork to be
unveiled at
Guadalupe Park
in 2024

GRB CONVENTION
CENTER
EXPANSION

Innovation

HOUSTON HOSTS
THE FIFA WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP FOR
THE FIRST TIME IN 2026

The Sunnyside Solar Farm, due in 2024, will transform a 240-acre former landfill into the nation’s largest urban solar farm

3,000 NEW AFFORDABLE SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES AND MORE THAN 10,000 APARTMENT HOMES

Quality of Life

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Houston hosts the 2028 Republican National Convention

INWOOD FLOOD MITIGATION

Bethune Empowerment Center development continues; Phases 2 and 3 adds a workforce development training center and an entrepreneurs' makerspace and innovation hub

Public Safety

Five additional projects planned for Turner's 50 by 50 Parks Initiative to improve neighborhood parks

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“Leadership is not based on what you do while you are there. It’s based on what will happen after you are gone.”

— Mayor Sylvester Turner

A Winning Legacy

Mayor Sylvester Turner